

ly acknowledged, with its own advantages and advances. Suggesting there is a dialectic between the “really bad” *tigueres* of the street – sin being the domain of men – and the sanctity they then achieve after conversion reinforces larger Dominican male values and expectations so that both the sinner and the saved are reinforced as cultural icons, lending a paradoxical respectability to both.

In chapter 7, “Pentecostal Social Currency and the Search for Respect,” Thornton traces the tangible benefits available to the converted. Respect is the symbolic currency easily exchanged for new opportunities, economic as well as social. While converts must guard that their seriousness is not jeopardized by questionable behavior or practice, the ultimate rewards are not recounted as salvation but rather as a renewed ability to garner the trust and confidence of family, friends, and neighbors, as well as potential employers. The ability to rise above, particularly for those extreme sinners of the past – gang leaders – makes the transformation more exceptional. It is through his repeated public performances that the convert can reify his redemption at the same time proclaim the power of the Holy Spirit.

Thornton takes the reader through thick description of the Pentecostal *evangélico* practice in the Dominican Republic, tracing the religious transformation in the urban barrio where Christianity has come to a distinct fork in the road. The assumption of Catholicism, so long a given in poor neighborhoods, is challenged in a way that provides converts a path not to salvation in the after-life but rather to respectability and identity in the mundane world they dismiss. If this book has any weaknesses, it may be that we did not hear enough from the Catholics who still fill the pews across the nation, even from poor neighborhoods, who do not subscribe to Dominican *vodú* nor accept the moral or spiritual claim of superiority or pure orthodoxy from *evangélicos*. But perhaps that is Thornton’s next project, one can only hope.

Kathleen N. Skoczen

**Voell, Stéphane, and Iwona Kaliszewska** (eds.): *State and Legal Practice in the Caucasus. Anthropological Perspectives on Law and Politics*. Farnham: Ashgate, 2015. 247 pp. ISBN 978-1-4724-4690-9. Price: £ 70.00

Political and social science scholars from “the West” have been paying attention to the Caucasus more than two decades, yet only during the last decade research has slowly started to diversify away from a domination by geopolitical thought. The edited volume “State and Legal Practice in the Caucasus” is a very important step on the path of empirical research on the Caucasus that goes beyond prevalent paradigms, venturing on the path of “Caucasus Paradigms” by Grant and Yalçın-Heckmann, another seminal anthropological contribution in pointing to the specific importance of pluralisms in the history and contemporaneity of the Caucasus.

This collection of articles with a focus on Caucasus as one single region is also exemplary for the study of legal and state practice in anthropology in general. Anthropologists, ethnographers, and social scientists from

Russia, from the whole of Caucasus region, as well as from “the West”, all pertaining to different generations, have contributed to the volume, that consequently merges different academic and scholarly traditions. In particular, the volume – and the editors – have attempted to bring the Soviet tradition of ethnography into dialogue with the Western anthropological ones. They have also advocated to embrace some assets of Soviet anthropological tradition into a “Western” one, the latter of which now dominates the social sciences not only among young researchers in the Caucasus but globally. With its emphasis on a historical perspective, this unchallenged strength of Soviet ethnographic tradition becomes expedient especially for Caucasus given its complex historical entanglements. Underscored by Arutiunov’s contribution on the historically continuous presence of several interlocked layers of legal practice ranging from imperial law, *adat*, and sharia to today’s de-facto states, the editors Voell and Kaliszewska rightfully outline the need for longue-durée perspectives on the Caucasus and the fact that Western social science oriented researchers can and should deliberately learn from the local research tradition of thinking in historical dimensions instead of displaying an often slightly condescending attitude. However, a genuine appreciation of historical dimensions entails a critical interrogation of prevalent historical narratives as well as to seriously scrutinize underlying concepts of agency and historical change more broadly. Kaliszewska and Voell rightfully underline that all contributions “... focus on conceptions of order” and “... how [they] are enforced, used, followed and staged in social networks and legal practice” (19). “People may arbitrarily opt for one law or another, mix them, create something new or simply ignore the law and act as they want to. In most cases, however, people are not free to make their own choices, and a concrete legal framework is forced upon them by existing power relations” (19). The whole edited volume’s contributions are about the often contingent manifestations of agency between choices and constraints in specific contemporary or historical Caucasian settings. Jalabadze and Janiashvili’s article points to a broader challenge couched in minor details that the editors could have addressed in the introduction to great benefit for the volume and future research. On the one hand, Jalabadze and Janiashvili emphasize the totalitarian nature of the Stalinist regime, but on the other hand, they highlight the fact that “civil legal conflicts between Svans were settled almost entirely on the basis of traditional law during the Soviet period” (40). Without denying the tragic Stalinist totalitarian grip on society, here an opportunity has been lost to show the omnipresence of plural legal practice. The contradiction between the Soviet system’s attempts and claims, on the one hand, and continuing plural legal practice, on the other, could have been used for a more theoretical appraisal of how and which spaces for plural legal practice remain in totalitarian societies where there are virtually no choices, but constraints. In short, cracks in the overall “totalitarian regime” narrative can be critically examined, researchers can better appreciate theoretical implications of micro-level practices that tell wholly different stories,

which could shed quite a contrasting light on a broader macro-level picture. Particularly, more inquiry into plural legal and state practice during the Soviet Union could be a starting point to examine contemporary prevalent (national) narratives about the Soviet period and look into contradictions between Caucasian plural legal practice and national historiographies. Such systematic historical appreciation would not only provide more insight in the specifics of “national in form and socialist in content” (see Karpov on p. 35), but also shed light on contemporary misrecognition of legal plural practice in the wider social science research on the Caucasus.

It is unfortunate that the volume is not making more explicit links to other disciplinary “languages” and debates while showing the wider implications of plural legal and state practice. In the introduction the editors relate Safiyev’s article as describing “the informal dealings of ... state representatives” (16), but they do not address debates about informal practices that have been particularly widespread in research on Central and Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union. In particular, this could have been done by linking Safiyev’s article to Christophe’s and to Di Puppò’s, who both write on systemic aspects of corruption (in unconventional ways), refuting pure incentive-based as well as pure culturalist approaches in looking at corruption as a social institution (Christophe) and outlining the importance to market the fight against corruption as a (story that tells about) success at reforming (Di Puppò). Both with emphasis on legal and state practice in the title of this volume and the contributions they have managed to assemble, the editors have potentially built a powerful bridge to relate to the literature under the heading of “informal practices” or “informality” in the Caucasus and beyond, but missed the opportunity by disregarding this connection. In spite of an incomplete overlap of informal practices with plural legal and state practices, in many instances they describe the flip side of similar or even the same social phenomena. Specifying this linkage could facilitate a better communication across disciplinary boundaries in the social sciences, for instance, of anthropologists with new-institutionalists, and enhance the flow of anthropological knowledge into neighbouring disciplines. Further, to point out this connection could also highlight how a *longue-durée* historical perspective that looks through a prism of historical plural legal practice sheds new light on change and continuity; something which has hardly been discussed in a framework of transition and transformation debates in the post-Soviet space, of which the Caucasus is a part.

Apart from the few shortcomings that I have outlined, Voell and Kaliszewska have not only assembled contributions by a particularly impressive range of authors, who work on both the North and the South Caucasus, anthropologists and ethnographers of various generations and intellectual traditions, but also scope and perspective of this volume make it a much needed and long-awaited, seminal contribution in regional terms. This edited volume can be considered a milestone for the study of the state and politics in Caucasus, but is also of particular interest for the field of the anthropology of law, anthropol-

ogy of the state, and wider political anthropology, particularly because the Caucasus is an area with an important history of legal pluralism. While the target audience are primarily scholars of political anthropology and of the Caucasus, it is also suitable for an interested public.

Andrea Weiss

**Widiyanto, Asfa:** *Religious Authority and the Prospects for Religious Pluralism in Indonesia. The Role of Traditionalist Muslim Scholars.* Zürich: Lit Verlag, 2016. 161 pp. ISBN 978-3-643-90650-2. (Southeast Asian Modernities, 17) Price: € 29.90

This book presents the hypothesis that a traditionalism seeking harmony between Islamic values and local culture and wisdom is likely to be an appropriate basis for the prosperity of religious pluralism in contemporary Indonesia. This will happen on condition that those who promote pluralism achieve credibility and great acceptance at the grass-root level. Basing himself on this insight, Widiyanto examines the discourse and practice of religious pluralism promoted by two Indonesian Muslim figures, A. Mustofa Bisri (b. 1944) and Emha Ainun Nadjib (b. 1953), whom he categorizes as belonging to the traditionalist segment. He focuses on their roles in the encouragement of pluralism in Indonesian public life, and the methods through which their ideas have attained influence in contemporary Indonesian Islam.

Widiyanto utilizes the concepts of “role,” “agency,” and “authority,” proposed by R. H. Turner (Role Theory. In: J. H. Turner, *Handbook of Sociological Theory*. New York 2002), Emirbayer and Mische (What Is Agency? *American Journal of Sociology* 103.1998: 962–1023), and Zambrano (Authority, Social Theories of. In: N. J. Smelser and P. B. Baltes [eds.], *International Encyclopedia of the Social and Behavioral Sciences*. Amsterdam 2001), respectively. He engages with these concepts to investigate the positioning of both figures in their encouragement of religious pluralism. He sees the notion of “role” as an appropriate tool to understand their influence on the reception of pluralism ideas among Indonesian people. The concept of “agency” is utilized to clarify the notion of role, emphasizing its reliance upon interaction and communication, and pointing out that a “role” is something that needs to be achieved, and cannot be considered as given. The recognition of this role by the society is, in turn, translated into “authority” (10–17).

The book proposes a stimulating argument that religious pluralism is likely to grow smoothly on the basis of traditionalist ideas. Accordingly, efforts to promote the idea of pluralism under the framework of liberal or modern Islam are considered unnecessary (30). For Widiyanto, the roles of both figures in encouraging pluralism in public life are distinct when compared to those of liberal Muslim network (JIL)-affiliated scholars and purely Muslim intellectuals.

One significant point is the method by which both figures are identified as what Widiyanto calls “traditionalist scholars” (for example, see p. 30). Bisri no doubt belongs to the core current of traditionalist scholarship,